

Call for Nominations for the USWBSI Researcher Co-Chair



U.S. Wheat & Barley
Scab Initiative

The [U.S. Wheat and Barley Scab Initiative](#) (USWBSI) is a national multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional research consortium whose goal is to develop effective control measures that minimize the threat of Fusarium Head Blight (scab), including the production of mycotoxins, for producers, processors and consumers of wheat and barley. The USWBSI is currently seeking nominations for its Researcher Co-Chair leadership position.

Leadership Description

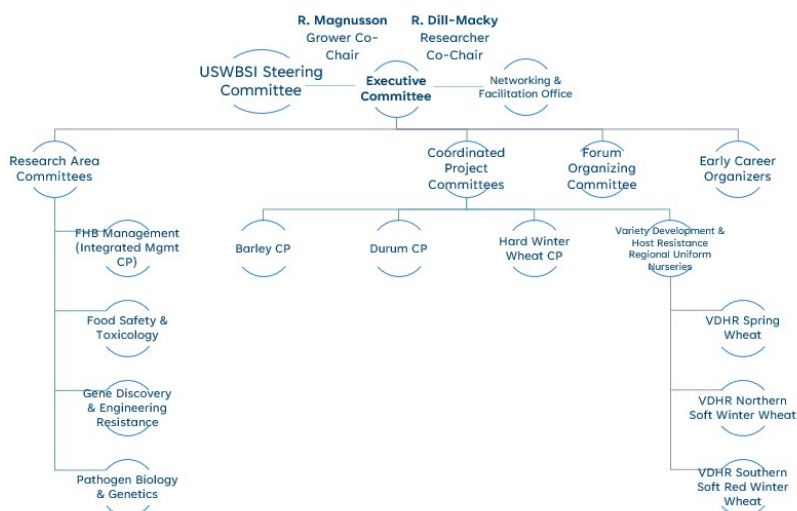
The USWBSI is led by two Co-Chairs, a Researcher Co-Chair and a Grower Co-Chair, who provide leadership to a consortium of wheat and barley research scientists, producers and industry representatives that together form the USWBSI. The mission of the USWBSI is to enhance food safety and supply by reducing the impact of Fusarium Head Blight (scab) on wheat and barley. Funding for wheat and barley FHB research is authorized at \$15 million/year through the U.S. Farm Bill. A portion of the annual allocation goes directly to USDA-ARS Base FHB

Research, with the remaining portion allocated to the USWBSI for recommendations (funding is distributed by USDA-ARS). In 2024, USWBSI's budget was allocated at \$7.6 million. USWBSI funding is managed by USDA-ARS and is part of the ARS National Program for Plant Disease. In fiscal year 2024, USWBSI recommendations to USDA-ARS funded 123 projects carried out by 91 researchers at both Land-Grant Universities and within the USDA-ARS in 31 states.

The two Co-Chairs of the USWBSI represent the research community (occupied 2018-present by Ruth Dill-Macky, University of Minnesota) and the stakeholder groups (occupied 2021-present by Richard Magnusson, grower from Roseau, MN). The Co-Chairs participate in the governance of the USWBSI and serve as the principal spokespersons of the USWBSI to the U.S. wheat and barley growers, the milling, malting and brewing industries, members of Congress and legislative staff, and the public.

The Co-Chairs lead both the Executive Committee (EC) and the Steering Committee (SC) of the Initiative. The EC serves to review the research priorities and the annual call for pre-proposals, and aids in the development of the process for the evaluation of pre-proposals by review panels. The EC also reviews the pre-proposals and develops the annual research plan and budget for the SC's consideration, oversees the annual National Fusarium Head Blight Forum and approves workshops to facilitate collaboration among scientists within the USWBSI. The Steering Committee comprises a broad representation of the research and stakeholder communities. The SC provides direction and guidance to the USWBSI and is responsible for the review and approval of the initiatives: Policies and Procedures, Research Priorities, and the annual Research Plan and Budget recommendations.

USWBSI STRUCTURE



U.S. Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative Networking & Facilitation Office

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Responsibilities & Expectations of the Researcher Co-Chair

The Researcher Co-Chair plays a vital role in both the governance and continued evolution of the USWBSI. In addition to the formally defined duties that are described below, the Researcher Co-Chair must take the responsibility for initiating discussions and activities that will move the USWBSI forward, adapting to address the changing science, USDA-ARS directives and stakeholder needs. The researcher Co-Chair serves as the primary spokesperson for the USWBSI, and the liaison with USDA-ARS and various stakeholder groups impacted by FHB. In this capacity he/she communicates research results and impacts to USDA-ARS and stakeholders. The Co-Chair also serves as the liaison transmitting information from the stakeholders to the researchers (PIs) whose research is funded by the USWBSI.

Key Responsibilities include:

- Leading and facilitating the Executive and Steering Committee meetings
- Working closely with the USWBSI NFO Director of Operations to provide guidance and support
- Overseeing strategic planning and decision-making
- Representing the organization to stakeholders through presentations, interviews, and meetings
- Ensuring compliance with organizational bylaws and policies
- Ensuring that the organization's financial and ethical standards are upheld
- Engaging in fundraising and advocacy efforts

In addition to the items above, the Researcher Co-chair visits USDA-ARS Headquarters annually, to maintain the partnership of the USWBSI with USDA-ARS.

The researcher Co-Chair is also the Director of the USWBSI's Networking and Facilitation Office (NFO). In this capacity he/she must communicate frequently-with the Director of Operations of the NFO on matters that pertain to the efficient operation of the USWBSI NFO.

The NFO is responsible for facilitation of the annual Research Plan & Budget (RPB), creating and implementing the annual performance reporting process, coordination of the annual National FHB Forum, all committee meetings, and the dispersal and storage of data and information. These activities are critical to helping the Initiative reach its goal of developing effective control measures that decrease the threat of FHB. The NFO promotes communication among the varied parties interested in FHB (scab) and represents the Initiative's only fixed asset.

The specific objectives of the NFO are to:

- 1) Maintain and enhance the management and accountability of the Initiative's resources.
- 2) Facilitate and enhance communication within the Initiative and with its stakeholders.
- 3) Administer the process of developing the Initiative's annual research plan and budget.
- 4) Manage and implement all educational programming, meetings and conferences.

Term of Service and Time Expectations

The Researcher Co-Chair position holds a 4-year term that may be reappointed, with no term limits. The Executive Committee evaluates the Co-Chair's performance and determines if a reappointment should be recommended to the Steering Committee. The SC holds an election to approve all appointments and reappointments. The Researcher Co-Chair can expect the following required attendance and time commitments during their tenure:

- The annual National FHB Forum each December
- EC meetings in April/May (annually) and December (in conjunction with the NFHB Forum), as well as periodic special meetings as needed to address pressing issues

- SC meetings in April/May (every other year) and annually in December (in conjunction with the NFHB Forum)
- Monthly Co-Chair/NFO meetings for operational updates
- Annual virtual sessions with RA/CP Committee Chairs to guide preparation of reviews
- Bi-annual Open Forum/Town Hall meetings with SC to determine working caps and other issues
- Annual virtual meetings with RA/CP chairs to present review panel recommendations
- Bi-weekly meetings with the NFO Director of Operations, as well as communication on as needed basis to address pressing issues
- Specialty workshops/planning meetings/Scabinar on an as requested basis
- Annual visit to D.C., generally in conjunction with the National Wheat Improvement Committee, to highlight USWBSI activities
- Attendance at related symposium/conferences to highlight USWBSI activities as needed

The USWBSI supports the Researcher Co-Chair by providing funding for project personnel/technical assistance toward offsetting the time commitment made by the Researcher Co-Chair.

Desired Qualifications

The USWBSI is seeking the following demonstrated candidate attributes:

- Previous experience in a leadership position, with active participation in USWBSI preferred
- Commitment to USWBSI's mission and values
- Strategic thinking and problem-solving ability
- Knowledge of governance and financial oversight
- Strong communication and relationship-building skills, with a collaborative leadership style
- Due to the federal advocacy nature of the position, individuals employed by USDA are not eligible

Nomination Process/Requirements

The USWBSI is accepting nominations for the position through June 30, 2025. The FHB Community is encouraged to submit self-nominations or nominations of others who are committed to the work of USWBSI and meet the outlined qualifications.

We request that interested parties submit a nomination packet comprised of the following:

- Completed nomination form
- Upload of a brief (1 page) statement of interest and qualifications for the position
- Upload of a biosketch (2 pages)

Submissions should be made by June 30, 2025 using this form:

>> [USWBSI Researcher Co-Chair Nomination Form](#)

All nominations will be reviewed by the USWBSI Executive Committee and finalists will be invited to participate in a virtual interview. The Executive Committee will put forward their recommendation to the Steering Committee in the 2025 Leadership Ballot. The SC will vote on the final nominee, with determination in November 2025. The position start date is preferably January 1, 2026, but is flexible and will include guidance from the current Researcher Co-Chair during a transition period to be outlined once the new Researcher Co-Chair is determined and is able to align with their preferences.